

# JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

*Special Issue on*

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# **JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

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## PREFACE

Prof. Dr. Ichiro Shiobara

Guest Editor

*Special Issue on "Entrepreneurship Around The World"*

It gives me an immense pleasure to place this special issue of the JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS & ENTREPRENEURSHIP into the hands of our esteemed readers. I am grateful to the leadership of the JIBE for providing me this enriching opportunity of acting as a guest editor for this special issue devoted to "ENTREPRENEURSHIP AROUND THE WORLD". I am pretty sure that the readers will find lot of food for thought in the articles that have been carefully selected for this special issue, after a thorough peer reviewing process. I decided to be very selective in accepting articles based on the recommendations of the reviewers, as I intended to provide quality articles representing divergent perspectives on different dimensions of entrepreneurship around the world . It could be possible for me to carry it out only with the help of the colleagues, associates and peers from different parts of the world. I would especially like to record a deep sense of appreciation for the help and support that I got from Professor Dr. Zafar U. Ahmed at all stages of the editing process. My sincere thanks are due to my peers who willingly agreed to act as reviewers.

Most of the books, articles, and research studies in the area of entrepreneurship around the world are confined to the scholarly analysis of the entrepreneurial process, of the traits and characteristics of successful entrepreneurs, guidance on business plans, raising capital, financial projections, venture capital, legal and tax matters, etc. There is another category of scholars and researchers who, out of their excitement, end up confining the discipline of entrepreneurship to motivation and leadership styles, traits, and theories. I don't see a problem either with them or even with those who are churning out literature on "History of Entrepreneurs". But, I hold and support the view that there is a need of concerted efforts on the part of the scholars in the area to examine the multi-dimensional issues of entrepreneurship development from divergent perspectives in order to provide an integrated picture of the discipline rather than



casting reflections, projecting stray thoughts, and coming out with their isolated views, without taking cognizance of strategic implications of entrepreneurial issues.

The success story of Silicon Valley in the United States reveals how universities, governmental agencies, venture capitalists, head hunters and entrepreneurs have joined hands together to create a “unique habitat”, an envy of the globe, that offers an environment fostering the development of new ventures, new industries, new business cultures, and unparalleled growth. It calls for an examination of strategic issues as to how everyone has responded to internal as well as external opportunities and threats.

It is high time for breaking the ground in the area of entrepreneurship research, as there is a great need for a profound research base in order to provide support to the budding entrepreneurs when they strive to enter into business internationally, and to the successful entrepreneurs as they explore virgin and untapped markets. We need research studies to cover the sophisticated topics such as navigating the world of venture capital funding and turning technological innovations into successful market realities, and also at the time to address the political, legal, social, psychological, cultural, and economic dimensions of entrepreneurship problems pertaining to marketing, production & operations, research & development, human resources and finance.

I wish and hope that our business schools and our scholars will respond to the needs of our times, and will play a proactive role in creating an entrepreneurial culture across the globe, for the welfare of the mankind.



## **WOMEN AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP: A CASE STUDY OF PORTUGAL**

Anabela Dinis  
Marilyn Helms

### **Abstract**

From the theoretical point of view, this study explores the mechanisms of the creation and development of business by women in Portugal. The study also compares the Portuguese entrepreneurial processes of women, where this trend is only emerging, to results obtained in other parts of the world. It explains both "why" and "how" women create and develop their businesses. Following a literature review about women entrepreneurs in Portugal, specific aspects and characteristics of their businesses, their motivations and their challenges, are discussed. Also the issue of institutional support is reviewed. At the practical level, these findings represent an indicator for politicians and officials responsible for the regional development of public support structures necessary to support entrepreneurship. This could help to maintain or improve the lines of support and adapt local development strategies to the female entrepreneur's characteristics. Finally the conditions of current women and future women entrepreneurs in Portugal is explored.

Anabela Dinis is a Ph.D. candidate at the Universidade da Beira Interior, Covilha, Portugal. Marilyn Helms is Sesquicentennial Endowed Chair and Professor of Management, Dalton State College, U.S.A.

## INTRODUCTION

As a result of easier access to capital and changes in society, the number of businesses created by women has recently increased throughout the world (Fangenson and Marcus 1991; Baker, Aldrich, & Liou, 1997; Marlow, 1977; Holmquist, 1997; Nelton, 1998 & 1999; Clarke 1999; Moddelmog 1999; & Solomon 1999). Research indicates that when women create their own businesses, they combine the structural difficulties of small enterprises with specific factors unique to women business owners. In general women typically cannot devote as much time and energy to the business as men because of their domestic responsibilities. While start-ups are increasing, half of all, small businesses do not survive more than three years (European Commission, 1997).

In regions with specific issues including rural areas, ill-favored urban zones, less developed regions or areas undergoing industrial reconversion, the inequalities facing small, women-owned businesses are more pronounced (Hunt, 1997). Isolation, under-qualification and the accumulation of social and economic difficulties often reinforce marginalization. Particularly in rural areas, women often are responsible for agricultural tasks, in addition to the domestic tasks. Furthermore, women in poor families, often more so than their husbands, are more committed to improving their life's conditions (Harper, 1996).

From a political standpoint, there is a growing awareness of the importance of women to the growth of self-employment. Governmental activities including support services and loans directed to women entrepreneurs have been implemented in the last few years in several parts of the world and in Europe in particular (Eurostat 1992, Comissão Europeia 1993, 1994, Comisión Européene 1997). Special emphasis has been given to the micro and small firms sectors as a way to combat long-term unemployment among women and to generate more effective local development (ENSR, 1995)

In 1993 the principle of respect of equality of opportunities in the rules of the European structural funds was introduced. Since then women benefit from regionalized interventions from the European Social Fund, and also from training actions developed in the European territory directed to less favored populations (the long-term unemployed and young people to be integrated in the job market) or more specifically from the European Initiative: NOW (New Opportunities for Women). Between 1994

and 1999, 785 millions of euros, in contrast with the 380 euros of the preceding period (1989-1993) have been destined to actions specifically directed to women. FEDER (European Fund for Regional Development) and FEOGA (European Fund for Agricultural Orientation Ad Guaranty) contributed indirectly to financing training and improving social infrastructures, as well with the supervising of such actions (Comissão Europeia 1997).

In Portugal, women's participation in the job market is less than men (8.2% unemployment of women versus 6.5% for men) (INE, Inquerito ao Emprego, 1996). In spite of this, Portugal, when compared with the rest of European Community, has one of the highest rates of entrepreneurship by women: 58.1% compared to 51.1% in Europe among its 15 member nations (Eurostat, 1999). This situation is quite surprising and some Portuguese researchers (e.g. Rodrigues, 1991) wonder if this number is an indicator of the modern culture of Portugal or, on the contrary, the result of the country's strong rural nature.

Portugal and the Portuguese economy, on the surface, appears healthy and ready to support entrepreneurship. The year 2000 was the seventh year of positive growth for the country, averaging three percent. At the same time, inflation fell from 5.2% to 2.5%. Private consumption is at 4.3% and investment has risen 6% ("Overview of the Portuguese Economy," 2000). When compared to the top 30 markets for trade and expansion, Portugal ranked twentieth. The top selected countries are characterized by a high degree of political and economic certainty, relatively stable financial markets, participation in multiple trade pacts with an emphasis on free trade, and little bureaucratic red tape. Portugal's GDP growth at 2.8% is above the EU average and the Socialist Party is actively involved in economic and political reforms (Sowinski, 2000).

Yet there is a need to raise per person GDP in Portugal through productivity increases. According to *The Economist*, investment is needed in private business along with creating a smaller public sector ("Survey: Portugal – Still Travelling Hopefully," 2000). Roberts (1999) agrees the economy is dominated by a few well-established conglomerates, multinational subsidiaries and small family businesses with very few rags-to-riches tales like in the US. She sites conservative lending by Portuguese banks, who prefer to be asset-based lenders rather than cash-flow based lenders, as

the reason. Venture capital barely exists and overseas lenders and investors are not an option as they have limited knowledge about the Portuguese market. Similar to Asian countries, failure is also not accepted in the culture so start-ups are fewer. Finally share ownership in a company is not part of the typical structure and is not a valued perk for employees, most of whom have never owned equities.

It seems then that the high rate of all entrepreneurial activity is a sign of traditionalism related with a rural culture. The employment of women in Portugal often represents under-paid jobs in agriculture or traditional industrial sectors. In the country's current period of agricultural-to-industrial reconversion, the creation of alternative activities and sources of income for women is a key element of social and economic reinserction. The Portuguese patterns should be analyzed in the light of the patterns of entrepreneurship by women in general to better understanding of both the specific and generic characteristics of the Portuguese condition. This study will explore "why" and "how" women create and develop their businesses by examining the mechanisms of creation and development. The study also compares the Portuguese entrepreneurial processes of women, where this trend is only emerging, to results obtained in other parts of the world and particularly in the US.

At the practical level, these findings represent an indicator for politicians and officials responsible for the regional development of public support structures necessary to encourage entrepreneurship. The findings could help to maintain or improve the lines of support and adapt local development strategies to the female entrepreneur's unique characteristics. Following a literature review about women entrepreneurs in Portugal, specific aspects and characteristics of their businesses, their motivations and their challenges, are discussed. Also the issue of institutional support is reviewed. Finally the conditions of current women and future women entrepreneurs in Portugal is explored.

## **WOMEN IN PORTUGAL**

### **Social Position**

Cabral (1991) asserts that women in Portugal move in a different environment of socialization and sociability than men. Most adult women live "submersed" or "closed"

in the conjugal (married) and post-conjugal(widowhood) universe. This means the existence of networks of contacts and incentives much more restricted and confined to the domestic-residential universe, while men more typically move in the socio-professional universe.

The different socialization of women, mainly developed in the familiar universe, is reflected in a stronger traditionalism, especially in rural areas. In fact, this is a common trait among the Portuguese population and is strongly associated with the lower levels of education and income. This characteristic is revealed in their orientation to a happiness profile (Cabral 1991). The idea of happiness connected with notions as "family," "money" and "wealth" is more usual in women. Meanwhile, the connection with "to do interesting things," "to feel useful" and "to be socially well positioned" are more frequently evidenced in men. The differences in socialization are also reflected in fewer international experiences of women. As an example only 46% of Portuguese women have been outside the country as compared to 64% of men. This lesser degree of business and international exposure may influence the type and scope of women's entrepreneurial ventures.

## **Education**

Portuguese women, in general, are less educated than men. Literacy levels of women are 87% compared to 93% of men. However, the situation is reversed in the highest educational levels where women represent 56% of all college students. Traditional educational values and attitudes persist (Sousa, 1991) with women concentrated in humanities (70% in 1990) rather than the scientific or technological areas (where their presence is still less than 20%) (Perista and Lopes, 1991).

The exposure to media and information is lower in Portugal than in any other European country. Cabral (1991) found 80% of women report little or no exposure to information compared to 53% of men. Furthermore, specific results of that study question the quality of the media exposures by women, as it is concentrated in television soap operas rather than news programs or daily newspaper. The media exposure is cited as a factor in the personal, human and social development of women.

Probably as a result of the differences in the socialization process, women show a more pessimist and often adverse attitude concerning their personal situation in society. This pessimism that Cabral (1992) called pre-cognitive pessimism (i.e., prior to an informed or reflexive analysis of the real situation) may exist because women depend less of their personal improvement than do men. Sousa (1991) agrees that when the husband achieves professional success, the Portuguese women renounce their professional career, giving priority to domestic activities.

The attitude of women is also not translated into political activism. Women are less likely to belong to a political party, a professional association, discuss political issues, or to give an opinion about the European Community. While one explanation is that political mobilization is not very institutionalized in the Portuguese population due in part to the recent democratic government, men are more likely to discuss political issues and belong to an association or political party (Cabral, 1991).

### **Women in the Job Market**

In light of the previous discussion, it is surprising that the percentage of women actively participating in the job market is higher than the European average (58.1% in 1997 against the European average of 51.1% (Eurostat, 1999). However, the high levels of activity do not imply an effective integration. In fact, it is not enough to have access to the job market; a higher level of technical and social commitment is needed.

The specific commitment in the professional arena can be evidenced in the concentration of women's business activity in a few sectors (Perista and Lopes, 1991). Many of the jobs held by women are extensions of domestic activities, often realized in circumstances of isolation - agriculture, hosting, restoration, baby-sitting, cleaning services, sewing, etc. (see Cabral, 1991 and Perista and Lopes, 1991). As Sousa (1991) states, a clear distinction still exists between "male" and "female" occupations, even though there has been an enlargement of roles to new areas. The entry of women in the traditionally male sectors of activity, even if becoming more usual (Rodrigues 1991), is still considered exceptional (Sousa 1991, Amancio 1991).

## **Women Entrepreneurs**

Portuguese women are more reluctant than men to embrace economic phenomena like competition and risk and give less importance to the initiative. Only 1% of professionally active women lead firm with employees (compared to 6% of men) (Cabral, 1991). While the women entrepreneurs in Portugal are “entrepreneurs” with the implied characteristics of innovation, such activity is often developed from traditional female activities. The results of a study conducted in Portugal, France, Greece, and Spain (IAPMEI, 1999a) found women create more enterprises in the areas of art, culture, and social work rather than in industrial sectors. Successful women in typical male sectors are exceptional cases where they have succeeded their father or husband (IAPMEI, 1999, and Ussman 1998). Others began firms with relatives or managed firms where they own part of the capital. Their profiles are similar: they are highly educated (with university degrees) and they maintain an effort to be professionally current. They like their job or profession very much and they did not enter it for ambition or for power. They have fundamental values and they like to participate in the development of their business and country. They also consider protection of the environment and social responsibility important (IAPMEI 1999a).

In many cases women work for “external” reasons (e.g. economic needs and to improve the family income, etc) but often participate in activities with social recognition which awakens their need for self-expression (Rodrigues, 1991).

### **Institutional Support and Women Entrepreneurs in Portugal**

The equality of opportunities and treatment of both genders are concerns voiced in the new Portuguese constitution since its inception to a democracy in 1976. However, an analysis of the job market shows this equality is still far from being a reality. At the institutional level, the European directive concerning this subject has been implemented and complemented through national measures and institutions. The European program: NOW (“New Opportunities for Women”) has created local initiatives in Portugal linking women’s organizations, associations, local authorities and firms in a “bottom-up” approach.



In collaboration with partners from other countries, these initiatives develop innovative and specific measures aiming for the equality of opportunities in the job market. However, it seems the projects presented by Portugal and approved in the European Community are small when compared with other European countries (43 projects from Portugal out of a total of 754 from the EC member states). In spite of the fact that Portuguese projects represented almost 6% of the total approved projects in the first phase of the program (1995-1997), they only received 2.5% of the European funds for this program. Other programs that support the creation of self-employment and enterprise development give women favorable treatment. These programs are supported by European funds but are administrated by different national institutions and include ILE (Local Employment Initiatives), SAJE (Support System for young Entrepreneurs) and RIME (Regimen of Incentives to Micro-Enterprises). These programs provide grants or incentives to create employment, particularly for women.

## RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Research on entrepreneurship by women is still very limited in Europe as compared to the US. Studies about the situation of Portuguese women in general (Cabral 1991) and in the job market in specific (Sousa 1991; Perista and Lopes, 1991), help explain the situation of women entrepreneurship in Portugal. Other, more specific studies, analyze the role of women in firms (Rodrigues 1991; Ussman and Dinis 1999), focus on the women manager (IAPMEI, 1999a; 1999) or analyze how women become entrepreneurs, with special emphasis on the succession process (Ussman, 1998). There is limited empirical data about “why” and “how” women create and develop their own businesses in Portugal. The objective of this exploratory study will present empirical and case study evidence to investigate:

- Why and how Portuguese women create their own businesses? i.e., What are their motivations and how do they do it?
- What are the difficulties they face in the creation and development of their businesses?
- What kind of success do they have? How do they value success?
- How important is institutional support in the entrepreneurial process?

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Given the exploratory character of this study and the questions posed, qualitative methodology is the most appropriate, namely case studies. Cases are recommended when the social context is of fundamental importance for the understanding and interpretation of the phenomena (Yin, 1989; Newman 1994; Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). In particular, the multiple holistic case design is appropriate (Yin, 1989) since several cases are to be analyzed. The unit of analysis is the “woman entrepreneur.” It is traditionally defined as the woman that creates or participates in the creation of the business, owns at least 50% of the capital and is completely or in large part, responsible for the management of the business.

Data collection was by personal interviews and direct observation for data triangulation (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994) and for larger construct validity (Yin, 1989). Interview protocol and themes were developed prior to the interviews based on the extensive literature review. Each woman was randomly selected and asked about the business idea and motives and the process of creation and development of her business. Respondents were also polled about formal and informal supports, its importance, difficulties they faced and successes they achieved. The interviews averaged 90 minutes in length.

Data interpretation or giving meaning and coherence to the information collected was based on what the respondent said (first order interpretation) and subsequent validation (second order interpretation). Finally a theoretical meaning was applied to the empirical evidence (third-order interpretation) (Newman, 1994).

## CASE STUDIES

Table 1 presents descriptive case data about the ten women and their businesses.

### *Why and How Women Create Their Businesses*

There are several different motivations that led to the creation of the business of the sample of ten women interviewed. They are presented in Tables 2 and 3. The motives indicated are supported by the start-up literature. In all the cases there was a correlation of multiple motives (positives and/or negatives) that triggered the decision to create

**Table 1: Characterization of the Entrepreneurial Case Study Respondents**

#	Previous activity	Age	Marital Status	Type of Business	Location of Business	Legal form	Age of Business (years)
A	Motorcycle shop Employee	24	Single	Embroidery	Caminha	Single owner	2
B	Domestic	39	Married with children	Rag dolls	S. João das Areias	Shareholding company (3 women)	10
C	Domestic, Peasant	40	Married no children	Wool tapestry	Mirandela/Covilhã	Single owner	1
D	Manager of a sweet shop	49	Married with children	Traditional almond sweets	Loulé	Shareholding company (Mother and daughter)	3
E	Administrative Employee	26	Married no children	Ceramics	Lalim (Lamego)	Shareholding company (couple)	<1
F	Domestic, Peasant	40	Married with children	Leather	Viera do Minho (Gondomar)	Single owner	18
G	Domestic	45	Single	Embroidery	Vila Nova de Famalicão	Single owner	4
H	Domestic	45	Married with children	Rags works/ Textiles	Teixoso	Single owner	9
I	Hotel employee	46	Married with children	Embroidery	Sabugal	Single owner	9
J	Publicity and visual art teacher	35	Single	Gifts	Setúbal	Single owner	3

**Table 2: Motives for Self-Employment by Women**

Case	Why did you decide to create the business?
A	Unsatisfied with the previous job and more pleasure with the present activity
B	Need to create her own employment and to give sequence to a training course
C	Need to solve family problems and to generate income
D	Need to create her own employment and knowledge of the sector
E	Unemployment of the husband along with complementary experiences to create a business
F	Help from the husband
G	Need to create her own employment
H	Motivated by friends
I	Old dream and a need to create her own employment
J	Desire for autonomy and limited job alternatives

**Table 3: Business Creation Motives Identified By Respondents Compared to Motives Suggested in the Literature**

<i>Motives present in the empirical research</i>	<i>Cases</i>										
Motives in the literature	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	
<b>Positive</b>											
Need/Desire of self affirmation/personal challenge								X			
Need/Desire of autonomy/independence										X	
Enjoy the activity/develop a hobby	X		X			X	X	X	X	X	
Realize an old dream									X		
Give continuity to a training/ job experience		X		X	X						
Make use of her knowledge/ capabilities	X		X	X	X			X			
To get financial security			X								
<b>Negative</b>											
Restricted options/self employment			X	X			X		X	X	
Trauma/family problem			X		X	X					
Need to balance work and family											
Dissatisfaction with the previous work	X									X	
Discrimination in the work place											
Other motives not cited in literature											

the business. These results support Muir's (1999) findings. Financial motivates were never the main start-up motivation. On the contrary, the need for self-affirmation and personal fulfillment were dominant themes.

The findings also support past research (e.g. Maysami & Goby, 1999) that personal savings are the main source of capital for women entrepreneurs especially in small businesses, followed by family funding. In some cases savings were augmented with financial support from European funds rather than commercial loans. It should be noted none of the women mentioned discrimination in the workplace as a motive to start a business. One explanation could be that no respondents were susceptible to the glass ceiling. Contrary to the literature, none of the respondents choose to create a business specifically to balance family and work demands. This fact could be explained by several reasons. First for single women without children, such a problem may not exist. In the married women surveyed, the motivation was the loss of a previous job, the lack of other attractive options or a need to help their husbands. Given the diversity of these situations, results coincide with Stevenson's conclusions (MacNabb, 1993) that married women give priority to family responsibilities.

Most of the group started their business alone with their own initiative. These results support findings by Maysami and Goby (1999); Muir (1999); Baker, Aldrich, and Liou (1997); and Clayton (1998). When they did start a business with others, the partnership included family members. The results supported Clayton (1998), indicating that in most cases, women have relatives working with them. In fact this is the situation even in the cases where the woman is the sole owner. Family participation could be a key reason for working at home. Another reason is the lower start-up cost of such home-based options.

### ***Difficulties Faced During The Entrepreneurial Process***

In Table 4, difficulties mentioned by the respondents are summarized. Most difficulties identified are common to all small businesses, namely: competitive problems, credibility in the market, economic recession, problems in receiving, growing the business and difficulties in finding suitable workers.

The difficulty in accessing financial resources is often mentioned in the literature, but the respondents did not mention them. The absence of such problems in this

**Table 4 : Difficulties Faced in the Creation and Development of the Business Compared to the Literature**

<i>Difficulties supported by the literature</i>	<i>Difficulties in the empirical research</i>									
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
Credibility			X	X						
Competition/clients/recession	X			X	X	X			X	
Resources/ Financial aspects		X					X	X		
Lack of information			X			X	X	X	X	
Disagreement with partners		X								
Difficulty in finding suitable workers							X	X		X
Balance between family and work										
Lack of previous opportunities to develop management skills										
Self-esteem/models										
Discrimination										
Lack of familiar support								(X)		

*(X) indicates that the difficulty was not explicitly stated but implied in the interview narrative*

research can be explained by the fact that they obtained sufficient personal/family funding. This is in tune with other authors' conclusions (e.g. Marlow, 1997 and Clayton, 1998).

The lack of information or poor understanding of the business processes seems to be a problem more associated with women living in more rural and isolated areas and/or with less business experience. It is the case of half of these respondents and these results coincide with Kraus-Harper (1992) and Clayton (1998) findings.

Interestingly, many of the difficulties usually associated with women's conditions, i.e. (1) balance family and work, (2) lack of previous opportunity to develop management skills, (3) lack of role models and (4) discrimination, were not indicated by the respondents. These absences are understandable in part, based on the type of business. Most respondents were small, family businesses and most of the women were somewhat released from domestic tasks. Concerning the lack of opportunities to develop management skills, in some cases they had previous training in management, in others they had previous related work experience, and once again the type of the business chosen allowed them to survive without the initial demands of advanced management skills. These skills were usually developed as the business

was growing and this made the skills acquisition easier. Finally, the lack of role models and discrimination was not relevant since all were traditional businesses for women.

In summary, the key difficulties were found more in the growth and development of the business rather than in its creation. Again, the type and structure of the firm can explain this fact. If there are low entry barriers within the business sector, it demands lower initial capital and less technical knowledge. For the same reasons, low entry barriers create stronger competition, reducing profit margins and causing difficulties maintaining and developing the businesses.

*Satisfaction from Entrepreneurship*

All the women interviewed were polled on the level of satisfaction with their business as reported on a Likert-type scale from 1 to 5, with 1 representing “not happy at all” to 5 representing “very happy.” The results are presented in Table 5.

**Table 5: Satisfaction from Entrepreneurship**

<i>Cases</i>	<i>Satisfaction #</i>	<i>Are you happy with your business? Why? On a scale from 1 to 5 how would you rate your degree of satisfaction?</i>
A	5	“Yes, very happy. I like what I do, the business is growing and I have some money to spend myself”
B	4	“Yes, very happy. The business has grown a lot and is not growing anymore because we want to leave it small. We like what we do and we have a lot of fun together. Furthermore, we get along very well with each other and support each other, both in business and in personal matters”
C	4	“Yes, I’m very happy. My products are beginning to be known and each time more people contact me to buy my tapestries. Moreover, my husband is better now and thanks to this I could save my marriage.”
D	4	“Yes, now I’m very happy. The business is going well since we got the contract with the big store. “
E	3	“Don’t know. It is still too soon to judge. We know that in the beginning, it is always difficult but we are full of hope that we will be successful.”
F	1	“No, we are not happy. We sell less each time and the competition is not fair. A lot of people do this type of works as a hobby and not as a profession, and sell their articles at low prices, we can not compete with them. We are in the business because we have not found a better source of income.
G	3	“Yes, more or less. Sales are just enough to survive.”
H	2	“We are not happy. Sales are almost insufficient to pay my debts. The only thing that makes me go on is my strong will.
I	3	“Not very much. Sales are decreasing. People have less money each time.”
J	4	“Quite happy. I do what I like and I don’t have problems with sales. My only problem is to find someone to help sell.”



It is interesting to note that the highest levels of satisfaction resulted from sales and sales growth along with personal achievement. The low levels of satisfaction, were exclusively related to the financial and commercial difficulties of the business. The primary criteria of success is a certain sales level. After that level, non-material criteria prevail as success measures. These findings parallel Muir's (1999) conclusions. It is important to realize that women's business and private lives are inexorably intertwined. It is not enough to judge their potential for business growth or success in purely masculine terms, i.e. quantitative measures of sales or income.

When asked about what has contributed to the success of the firm (in the creation and/or development stage), the answers were varied but some factors stand out as shown in Table 6. Factors related to technical capacities were not mentioned as relevant by the sample. This may be related to the dimensions and type of business analyzed. In fact, the importance of international experience or planning skills can be very important in large firms with organizational complexity and fast growth but they seem to be less important in small businesses with local markets, as is the large handicraft sector in Portugal. In the same way, the human relation and communication skills seem less important when the business is essentially small and family-based. Finally the existence of role models does not seem important because the businesses analyzed are an extension of typical female activities.

The strong motivation or commitment to succeed as well as the support from family and friends are important factors to succeed (See Table 7). These results are consistent with Haskins, Gibb, and Hubert (1989) and Good (1996) who concluded that family friends and acquaintances with whom the entrepreneur maintains daily contacts are one of the most important sources of support in the creation and development of a business.

### ***The Importance And Effectiveness of Institutional Support***

In the sample, 30% of the entrepreneurs never asked for institutional support and 70% of the women asked for institutional support at least once. The women that did not ask for institutional support to create or grow their firm either (1) did not know of the existence of such supports, (2) felt they did not need support, or (3) did not trust the system. In most cases when institutional support was used to create the business

Table 6: Success Factors of Female Entrepreneurship

<i>Factors indicated in the literature</i>	<i>Factors referred to by the literature</i>									
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
Patterns of growth										
Access to financial resources		X		X	X					
Personality								X		
Strong motivation to succeed			X				X	X	X	X
Integration in networks	X						X			
Training		X			X					
Availability to learn	X									
Business experience				X	X		X			
International experience										
Planning capabilities/skills										
Human relations skills										
Communication skills										
Family/friends support	(X)	X	(X)	X		X			(X)	X
Existence of role models										

(X) indicates that the difficulty was not explicitly stated but implied in the interview narrative

Table 7 : Non-Institutional Support of Respondents

<i>Cases</i>	<i>Support in creation</i>	<i>Support in development</i>
A	<b>Parents:</b> they financed the first investments and her personal spending when she didn't have income	<b>Colleagues:</b> in the fairs they gave her some information about commercial circuits
B	<b>Husband:</b> Moral and financial support	<b>Husband and sons:</b> help in the production and sales of the products
C	<b>Parents:</b> Moral support	<b>Parents:</b> Moral support
D	<b>Husband:</b> information/ advice and financial support	<b>Husband and sons:</b> help in the production, distribution and commercialization of the products
E	-----	-----
F	<b>Husband:</b> information/advice and help in the production	<b>Husband:</b> information/advice and help in the production
G	-----	<b>Colleagues:</b> in the fairs they gave her information about commercial circuits
H	<b>Friends:</b> moral support, incentive to create the business	-----
I	<b>Husband:</b> moral support and disponibilization of the ground floor of their house.	<b>Husband:</b> indirect support - in domestic tasks
J	<b>Mother:</b> moral support	<b>Mother:</b> moral support and help with production

business it was used again to further develop the business. Table 8 presents a description of the institutional support used by the respondents.

The Professional Training and Employment Institute (IEFP) was the most important source for information. However, business associations were not as relevant since they are restricted to act as legal representatives for candidates for European projects. Local authorities do not specifically support business. The type of support most needed was financial support to acquire equipment and to hire employees. In some cases training and help in the bureaucratic process was also solicited. Institutional support seems to be relevant and important especially in the business creation phase. In fact, almost all the women asking for institutional support to create the business considered that support very important.

## CONCLUSIONS

This exploratory study was conducted to provide initial insights into the situation of women-owned small businesses in Portugal. Most of the ideas in the literature were confirmed. The results indicate that:

- The action of the business creation is triggered by several factors that can be positive (needs and desire of personal realization) and/or negative (lack of options or other negative circumstances of their personal lives);
- In the same way, the decision to create the business could be the result of circumstances of the public life (e.g. loss of a previous job) and/or private life (e.g. help of the husband or a daughter);
- When women establish the business alone or in partnership, they work and get advice from family and friends and develop strong ties as well as informal and cooperative relationships.
- Family members assume a fundamental role in the entrepreneurial process for several reasons: (1) it can constitute both an obstacle or an important motive to create the business and (2) it constitutes an important source of moral support that is often more valued than financial and human resources support.

**Table 8: Institutional Support and Evaluation by the Respondents**

<i>Cases</i>	<i>Organization</i>	<i>Type of support</i>	<i>Knew about the support</i>	<i>Importance of the support-evaluation between 1 (very bad) and 5 (very good)</i>	<i>Evaluation</i>
A	Consulting firm	Presentation of a project to RIME program	Through a friend	Very important. Without that incentive probably she would not have begun the venture. The process went well. What seems not to work are the entities that deliver the money.	4
	Local authority	Financial support for participation in fairs	Through colleagues	She never got the support.	1
B	IEFP	Training and financial support	Registered in IEFP to apply for a job	Very important. It was the training course on creation of the business.	5
					3
	Local development association (NGO)	Leaflets to market the business	Contacted by technicians of the institution	Although well –minded the initiative did not field the expected results: the leaflets were too big and thus seldom effective.	
C	Local authority	Financial support for participation in fairs	Contacted by technicians of the institution	It had some importance. From the first contact she could get into the fair circuits where she sells her products.	3
	IEFP	Business formalization and financial support from ILE program	Contacted by technicians of the institution	There are no results because she still didn't decided to go to the institution to begin the process. The technicians however were kind and polite.	4
D	IEFP	Support for hiring 2 employees (ILE) Presentation of a project to RIME program	Through her husband and technician in IEFP	Very important. The institution had a very good program.	5
	Business association	Presentation of the project for RIME program	Knowledge from her previous job	Till now she had no result.	1

*Continued*

<i>Cases</i>	<i>Organization</i>	<i>Type of support</i>	<i>Knew about the support</i>	<i>Importance of the support-evaluation between 1(very bad) and 5 (very good)</i>	<i>4 Evaluation</i>
E	IEFP	Presentation of a project to ILE program	Knowledge from her previous job	Quite important. The financial support allows her to meet initial expenses when she didn't have income.	5
G	IEFP	To find employees with the suitable	Own initiative	Very important. They organized a training course where she received the needed training.	3
	Local authority	training Financial support to participate in fairs	Through colleagues	Some importance. She received financial support to participate in fairs.	1
H	IEFP	Training, elaboration and presentation of a project to ILE program	Through friends and colleagues	The support has been negative. It created high expectations and for this reason she assumed excessive debts.	N/A
	Social security	Financial support to hire an employee	Through friends and known people	The business did not suit the conditions for the support.	

- The difficulties faced by women entrepreneurs are associated with the small size, probably related to their lack of business experience and information. Discrimination does not seem to be a relevant problem (at least in the businesses related with traditional feminine activities)
- They are motivated and evaluate their success from economic and non-economic factors.
- Institutional support seems to have some importance primarily in the phase of creation of the business and in financial support, training and advice.
- Informal networks, as well as initiatives from institutional agents to reach the potential clients is important to increase the use of institutional support.
- Some dysfunction's exist both in demand and supply of institutional support that are responsible for a lower utilization and effectiveness of such support.

### ***Changes Needed To Encourage Entrepreneurship***

As in all entrepreneurial processes, the social component is strongly associated with the processes of creation and development of businesses by women. While men use the social (or relational) component as a mean to achieve an objective (i.e., a better economic performance), women assume it as an end in itself.

Second, understanding the social component of entrepreneurship by women supports expanding the advising services beyond technical areas such as marketing or budgeting. Services should have a relational character and take in account the situation of each woman. Furthermore, it is important to develop other capabilities in which women may be deficient. Especially in Portugal, educational activities (tailored to individual needs) could be implemented through specific training in business and in personal development. This would create the empowerment of the women, i.e. the development of their own human capital.

Fourth, a support structure for women should include conditions to promote the exchange of information and experiences. Because public and private spheres are interrelated, an attempt to create a favorable business environment for women should

consider both personal and professional aspects. Finally, the overlap between public and private life of the woman entrepreneur, and how women value success, mean ideas about how to run a business and what results can be expected are generalized throughout Portugal. It should not be seen as a dogma but the subjective character of the entrepreneurial process should be considered.

## **STUDY LIMITATIONS AND AREAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCHES**

To further generalize these exploratory findings, it is important to enlarge the number of cases analyzed in future research. While businesses in the handicraft sector dominate business creation in Portugal, a larger sample should be explored to include a broader set of entrepreneurs to determine further differences in the degree of urban influence and accessibility, versus rural conditions. Future research should select regions with the same characteristics or develop ways to control this variable.

No distinction was made between generators of supplementary income (usually in part-time), creators of self-employment, or the true entrepreneurs. These distinctions could reveal differences in motivations, difficulties, success evaluation and experience with institutional support. Concerning institutional support, it is important to note this study only analyzed the demand side. Further research could include elements of the institutional system including supply side policies. Finally, future research should address the level of utilization support (e.g. financial, counseling, etc.) both in creation and in development phases, as well as the relationship between institutional support and the firm's survival and performance.



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